United Nations ST/AI/2011/1

Secretariat

23 March 2011

Administrative instruction

Sabbatical leave programme

The Under-Secretary-General for Management, pursuant to section 4.2 of Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2009/4, and for the purpose of defining the conditions under which staff members may be granted sabbatical leave, promulgates the following:

Section 1
General provisions

1.1 The objectives of the sabbatical leave programme are:

(a) To provide an opportunity for staff members to bring added value to their contribution to the Organization and to enhance their professional growth through the pursuit of studies and research projects on issues related to the work of the United Nations; to promote the spirit of continuous learning as stipulated in the Secretary-General's bulletin on learning and development policy (ST/SGB/2009/9);

(b) To enhance dialogue and build contacts between the United Nations and other organizations and institutions engaged in related work worldwide, as well as to expose United Nations staff members to state-of-the-art research and practices on issues on the international agenda.

1.2 Sabbatical leave may be approved for eligible staff members seeking to pursue projects of study and research in universities recognized by the United Nations and in independent institutions worldwide, in participating research and training centres of the United Nations University, or in institutions that are members of the Academic Council on the United Nations System.

1.3 Staff members shall be responsible for undertaking the following before applying for the sabbatical programme:

(a) Identifying the institution in which they propose to carry out their studies;

(b) Securing their acceptance by that institution for the purpose of carrying out the proposed studies at a specified time during the year for which the sabbatical leave is requested;

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(c) Ascertaining the type of support services and facilities that the institution is prepared to provide during the period of sabbatical leave.

Section 2
Eligibility

The programme is open to United Nations staff members who, at the time of application:

(a) Have completed five years of service with the Secretariat within the last six years;

(b) Are expected to serve with the Secretariat for no less than two years after completion of the sabbatical leave, subject to staff rule 4.13 (c).

Section 3
Duration

Sabbatical leave may be approved for a period not exceeding four months, subject to release of the staff member by the head of department or office. An extension may be granted by the head of department or office on an exceptional basis and in accordance with section 5.3 of the present instruction.

Section 4
Application and selection process

4.1 An information circular on the sabbatical leave programme shall be issued every year, inviting staff members to apply for the programme and stipulating the application deadline and procedures. The information circular shall also direct staff members to a range of institutions where the sabbatical may potentially be pursued.

4.2 Eligible staff members interested in the programme shall submit an application in accordance with the provisions contained in the information circular.

4.3 Applications shall be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

(a) Relevance of the study to the current and future work of the United Nations and to the current or future responsibilities of the applicant;

(b) Feasibility of the proposed study and whether it can be undertaken and completed within the proposed period of the sabbatical leave;

(c) Appropriateness of the planned methodology;

(d) Quality of the proposal, demonstrating awareness of the latest developments in the area of study;

(e) Suitability of the candidate to carry out the proposed research project.

4.4 Applications shall be submitted to the Office of Human Resources Management through, and endorsed by, the respective head of department or office.

4.5 The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management shall make a final selection on the basis of the recommendations of the selection

committee. The committee shall be composed of representatives of the Academic Council on the United Nations System and senior United Nations staff members with experience in the substantive areas of the proposals submitted for consideration that calendar year. The committee shall evaluate applications in a competitive manner in accordance with the criteria set out in paragraph 4.3 above and shall recommend a maximum number of 15 applications. In making its final recommendations, the committee shall endeavour to ensure diversity in regard to the functions, levels, locations, nationalities and gender of the endorsed candidates as well as the subject matter of the studies.

4.6. The selected staff member shall be informed of the decision and shall be requested to accept in writing the terms and conditions specified below.

Section 5
Terms and conditions of sabbatical leave

5.1 The sabbatical leave shall be taken during the calendar year following the year in which the application was submitted. Under exceptional circumstances, such as exigencies of service or illness, the Office of Human Resources Management may authorize the deferral of sabbatical leave to the following year.

5.2 The staff member shall be placed on special leave with full pay for the sabbatical leave period. Staff members on sabbatical leave shall continue to receive salary, post adjustment and all related entitlements, such as rental subsidy and education grant, applicable to their regular duty station. The provisions of appendix D of the United Nations Staff Rules shall cover initial and return travel, as well as activities directly related to the course of study.

5.3 Should the staff member request additional time to complete the study, leave without pay may be granted on an exceptional basis, provided that annual leave has been exhausted, subject to exigencies of service and contingent on the approval of the head of department or office.

5.4 While on special leave with full pay, staff members shall continue to accrue service credits towards sick, annual and home leave, salary increments, seniority, termination indemnity and repatriation grant. If the sabbatical leave continues after four months, on special leave without pay, no credits shall accrue during that period. In accordance with the provisions of the current administrative instruction on the special post allowance, staff members shall not receive a special post allowance while on sabbatical leave.

5.5 The United Nations shall pay for the cost of one round-trip travel for the staff member to the place of study and/or research and for the cost of unaccompanied shipment by air of 50 kilograms (110 pounds) each way. The staff member shall be responsible for the cost of any other travel for himself or herself and for any dependants, as well as for the cost of books, educational materials, fees for attendance or participation in conferences, courses or other meetings and activities.

5.6 A stipend to cover partial living expenses, in an amount to be determined yearly by the Office of Human Resources Management, shall be paid to staff members during the period of special leave with full pay, provided that the place of study and/or research is beyond commuting distance from the staff member's duty

station and that he/she has actually rented accommodation in the area near the place of study and/or research.

5.7 Within six months of completion of their sabbatical leave, staff members shall submit to their head of department or office a report on the study and/or research they have undertaken. The head of department or office shall forward a copy of the report to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management. The report may be shared within the Organization by the Office of Human Resources Management as deemed appropriate. To assess the impact of the sabbatical leave programme, in the year after the completion of the programme, the Office of Human Resources Management shall require staff members and their supervisors to complete a follow-up questionnaire to determine the benefits of the programme for the department concerned and for the staff member.

5.8 In the case of separation initiated by the staff member prior to the completion of two years of service upon return from sabbatical leave, the payment made by the Organization under sections 5.5 and 5.6 above may be recovered.

Section 6
Final provisions

6.1 The present administrative instruction shall enter into force on 23 March 2011.

6.2 Administrative Instruction ST/AI/2000/4 of 5 April 2000 is hereby abolished.

(*Signed*) Angela **Kane**
Under-Secretary-General for Management